

FINDING THE POLE

BY JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

As on the preceding night, each man took his hour's watch on the upper plateau. When it came to Altamont's turn, and he had gone out to relieve Bell, Hatteras called his old companions round him. The doctor left his desk and Johnson his cooking, and hastened to their captain's side.

"My friends," he said, "let us take advantage of the American's absence to talk business. There are things which cannot concern him, and with which I do not choose him to meddle."

Johnson and Clawbonny looked at each other, wondering what the captain was driving at.

"I wish," he continued, "to talk with you about our plans for the future."

"All right, talk away, while we are alone," said the doctor.

"In a month, or six weeks at the outside, we can leave here. Have you thought of what we had better do this summer?"

"Have you, captain?" asked Johnson.

"Have I? Not an hour of my life passes without revolving in my mind one cherished purpose. I suppose not a man among you intends to retrace his steps?"

No one replied, and Hatteras went on to say:

"For my own part, even if I must go alone, I will push on to the north pole. Never were men so near it before, for we are not more than 300 miles distant at most; and I will not lose such an opportunity without making every attempt to reach it. Even though it be impossible. What are your views, doctor?"

"Your own, Hatteras."

"And yours, Johnson?"

"Like the doctor's."

"And yours, Bell?"

"Captain," replied the carpenter, "it is true we have neither wives nor children waiting us in England, but after all, it is one's country—one's native land! Have you no thoughts of returning home?"

"We can return after we have discovered the pole quite as well as before, better even. Our difficulties will not increase, for as we near the pole we get away from the point of greatest cold. We have fuel and provisions enough. There is nothing to stop us, and we should be culpable, in my opinion, if we allowed ourselves to abandon the project."

"Very well, captain; I'll go along with you."

"That's right; I never doubted you," said Hatteras. "We shall succeed, and England will have all the glory."

"But there is an American among us!" said Johnson.

Hatteras could not repress an impatient exclamation.

"I know it!" he said, sternly.

"We can't leave him behind," added the doctor.

"No, we can't," repeated Hatteras, almost mechanically.

"And he will be sure to go, too."

"He will be sure to go, too; but who will command?"

"You, captain."

"And if you all obey my orders, will the Yankee refuse?"

"I shouldn't think so; but suppose he should, what then?"

"He and I must fight it out."

The three Englishmen looked at Hatteras, but said nothing. Then the doctor asked how they were to go.

"By the coast, as far as possible," was the reply.

CHAPTER VI.

"But what if we find open water, as is likely enough?"

"Well, we'll go across it."

"But we have no boat."

Hatteras did not answer, and looked embarrassed.

"Perhaps," suggested Bell, "we might make a ship out of some of the planks of the Porpoise."

"Never!" exclaimed Hatteras, vehemently.

"Never!" said Johnson.

The doctor shook his head. He understood the feeling of the captain.

"Never!" reiterated Hatteras. "A boat made out of an American ship would be an American!"

"But, captain—"

The doctor made a sign to the old boatwain not to press the subject further.

This ended the day, and the night passed without disturbance. The bears had evidently disappeared.

The first business next day was to arrange for a hunt. It was settled that Altamont, Bell, and Hatteras should form the party. Clawbonny should go and explore as far as Isle Johnson, and make some hydrographic notes, and Johnson should remain behind to keep house.

At 8 o'clock they started, accompanied by Duke, who frisked and gambled with delight. They had been gone about an hour when Johnson suddenly heard the report of a gun.

"Captain!" he exclaimed. "They have found something, and pretty quick, too."

A second and a third shot followed.

"Bravo!" again exclaimed the boatwain; "they have fallen in luck's way!"

But when three more shots came in rapid succession, the old man turned pale, and a thought crossed his mind which made him rush out and climb hastily at the top of the cone.

He shuddered at the sight which met his eyes.

The three hunters, followed by Duke, were tearing home at full speed, followed by the five huge bears! Their six bullets had evidently had no effect. The monsters were close on their heels.

Hatteras, who brought up the rear, could only manage to keep off his pursuers by flinging down one article after another—first his cap, then his hatchet, and, finally, his gun. He knew that the inquisitive bears would stop

and examine every object, sniffing all round it, and this gave him a little time, otherwise he could not have escaped, for these animals outstrip the fleetest horse, and one monster was so near that Hatteras had to brandish his knife vigorously, to ward off a tremendous blow from his paw.

At last, though panting and out of breath, the three men reached Johnson safely, and slid down the rock with him into the snow house. The bears stopped short on the upper plateau, and Hatteras and his companions lost no time in barring and barricading them out.

"Here we are at last!" exclaimed Hatteras, "we can defend ourselves better now. It is five against five."

"Four!" said Johnson, in a frightened voice.

"How?"

"The doctor!" replied Johnson, pointing to the empty sitting room.

"Well, he is in Isle Johnson."

"A bad job for him," said Bell.

"But we can't leave him to his fate, in this fashion," said Altamont.

"No, let us be off to him at once," replied Hatteras.

He opened the door, but soon shut it, narrowly escaping a bear's hug.

"They are there!" he exclaimed.

"All!" asked Bell.

"The whole pack."

Altamont rushed to the windows, and began to fill up the deep embrasure with blocks of ice, which he broke off the walls of the house.

His companions followed his example silently. Not a sound was heard but the low, deep growl of Duke.

They were besieged.

All were worried about the good doctor.

"We must get rid of the bears before he comes," said Hatteras.

"But how?" asked Bell.

It was difficult to reply to this. A sortie was out of the question. They could hear the bears prowling about outside, growling and scraping the walls with their enormous paws.

However, action must be taken speedily. Altamont resolved to try a porthole through which he might fire on his assailants. He scooped out a hole in the wall, but his gun was hardly pushed through when it was seized with irresistible force and wrenched from his grasp before he could even fire.

"Confound it!" he exclaimed, "we're no match for them."

He hastened to stop up the breach as fast as possible.

This state of things had lasted upwards of an hour, and there seemed no prospect of a termination.

The question of a sortie began now to be seriously discussed. There was little chance of success, as the bears could not be attacked separately, but Hatteras and his companions had grown impatient. Also they were ashamed of being kept in prison by bears.

He took Johnson's furnace poker and thrust it into the stove, while he made an opening in the snow wall, or, rather, a partial opening, for he left a thin sheet of ice on the outer side. As soon as the poker was red hot, he said to his comrades, who stood eagerly watching him, wondering:

"This red hot bar will keep off the bears when they try to get hold of it, and we shall be able easily to fire across it without letting them snatch away our guns."

Hatteras withdrew the poker, and plunged it in the wall. The melting snow made a loud, hissing noise, and the two bears ran and made a snatch at the glowing bar; but they fell back with a terrible howl, and at the same moment four shots resounded, one after the other.

"Hit!" exclaimed Altamont.

"Hit!" echoed Bell.

"Let us repeat it," said Hatteras, carefully stopping up the opening meantime.

The poker was again thrust into the fire, and in a few minutes was ready for Hatteras to recommence operations.

Altamont and Bell reloaded their guns, and took their places; but this time the poker would not pass through.

"Confound the beasts!" exclaimed the American.

"What's the matter?" asked Johnson.

"What's the matter? Why, they are piling up block after block, intending to bury us alive!"

"Impossible!"

"Look for yourself; the poker can't get through."

It was worse than alarming. The bears meant to stifle their prey. They were heaping up huge masses, which would make escape impossible.

Two hours passed. The air grew close. Every opening was hermetically sealed. The stoves would hardly draw, and it was evident would soon go out altogether for want of oxygen.

Hatteras was the first to see their fresh danger, and he made no attempt to hide it from his companions.

"If that is the case," said Altamont, "we must get out at all risks."

"Yes," replied Hatteras; "but we must wait till night. We will make a hole in the room, and let in some air, and then one of us can fire out of it on the bears."

"It is the only thing we can do, I suppose," said Altamont.

Right drew on, and the lamp in the sitting room began to burn dim for want of oxygen.

At 8 o'clock the final arrangements were completed, and all that remained to do was to make an opening in the roof.

They had been working away at this for some minutes, when Johnson, who had been keeping watch in the sleeping room, came in hurriedly.

"What's the matter?" all asked at once.

"Nothing exactly," said the old sailor, "and yet—"

"Come, out with it!" exclaimed Altamont.

"I hear a peculiar noise?"

"Where?"

"Here, on this side, on the wall of the room."

All stopped working and listened. Johnson was right. A noise there certainly was on the side wall, as if some one were cutting the ice.

"Don't you hear it?" repeated Johnson.

"Hear it? Yes, plain enough," replied Altamont.

"Is it the bears?" asked Bell.

"Most assuredly."

"Well, they have changed their tactics," said old Johnson, "and given up the idea of suffocating us."

"They are going to attack us," said Bell.

"We shall have a hand-to-hand struggle, that's all," said Hatteras.

"With knife and hatchet, then," returned the American. "The guns would be useless here."

The noise increased. "They are hardly six feet off now," said the boatwain.

"Right, Johnson!" replied Altamont; "be ready for them."

Seizing a hatchet, he placed himself in fighting attitude, planting his right foot firmly forward and throwing himself back.

Hatteras and the others followed his example, and Johnson took care to load a gun in case of necessity.

CHAPTER VIII.

Every minute the sound came nearer, till at last only a thin coating separated them from their assailants.

Presently this gave way with a loud crack, and a huge dark mass rolled over into the room.

Altamont had already swung his hatchet to strike, when he was arrested by a well-known voice, exclaiming: "For heaven's sake, stop!"

"The doctor! the doctor!" cried Johnson.

And the doctor it actually was who had tumbled in among them in such undignified fashion.

"How do ye do, good friends?" he said, picking himself up.

His companions stood stupefied for a moment, but joy soon loosened their tongues, and each rushed eagerly forward to welcome his old comrade. Hatteras was fairly overcome with emotion, and hugged him like a child.

"But how did you know we had been attacked by a troop of bears?" asked Altamont, when they got their breath.

"What we were most afraid of was that you would come back, never dreaming of danger."

"Oh, I saw it all. Your repeated shots gave me the alarm. When you commenced firing I was beside the wreck of the Porpoise, but I climbed up a hummock, and discovered five bears close on your heels. I crept cautiously nearer, sometimes going on all fours, sometimes slipping between great blocks of ice, till I came at last quite close to our fort, and then I found the bears working away like beavers."

"But what danger you were in, Mr. Clawbonny," said Bell. "Any moment they might have turned round and attacked you."

"When I saw what the bears were up to, I determined to get back to you by some means or other. I waited till it got dark, then I glided noiselessly along towards the powder magazine. I speedily commenced operations with my snow-knife. A famous tool it is. For three mortal hours I have been hacking and heaving away, but here I am at last, tired enough and starving, but still safe."

"To share our fate!" said Altamont.

"No, to save you all; but, first give me a biscuit and a bit of meat."

A big meal was soon before him, but the little man could talk while he was eating.

"Did you say to save us?" asked Bell.

"Assuredly!" was the reply.

"How?" everyone asked.

"My plan is quite simple, and part of the work is done already."

"What do you mean?"

"You shall see. But I am forgetting that I brought a companion with me."

"What do you say?" said Johnson.

The doctor went into the passage, and brought back a dead fox, newly killed.

(To be continued.)

Definite Location.

Every visitor at the new capitol at Harrisburg, Pa., who gets as far as the registration room is expected to write his name in a big book, together with his birthplace and present residence. Not long ago, when a crowd of excursionists visited the grounds and buildings, a stout girl started to register.

She paused, pen poised in air, and called out to an elderly lady, comfortably seated in a big chair. "Mou, vere was I borned at?"

"Dis man wants to put it in der big book."

"Achi!" answered the mother, "you know vell enough—in der old stone house."—Troy Times.

Testing Her.

"How would you feel, Clarissa, if you and I were sailing down the stream of life together, far away from here?"

"How far, George?"

"Oh, far, far away!"

"I'd be so terribly homesick for mother!"

And from that night this young man ceased his visits.—Judge.

The Collector's Retort.

After a long wait the crafty debtor glanced up from his desk.

"Have a chair," he said to the persistent dun collector, who stood near the door.

"I'm not tired," was the fierce retort; "but this bill is. It's been standing a long time now!"—Judge.

Might Be His Fault.

"Don't go 'roun' complainin' 'bout de way yob friends has treated you," said Uncle Eben. "When a man ain't got de right kind o' friends it's ginerly because he didn't deserve 'em."

SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY

Chinese schools and students have grown rapidly in the last decade.

Babylon's inhabitants frequented libraries, seventeen centuries before Christ.

Under the new law for buildings in New York city the number of dark rooms in tenements have been reduced from 250,000 to 101,117. "Let there be light," is the motto of the board of inspection.

Of the 1,467 foreigners at the colleges of the United States, 460 hail from North America, 458 from Asia, 313 from Europe, only 154 from South America, 64 from Australia and 18 from Africa.

The United States has more (22,244,446) dairy cows than any other country in the world; more horses, 23,000,032; more mules, 4,056,399; more swine, 57,976,361, and (except British India) more cattle, 73,246,573.

In a Belfast breach of promise case the man, a farmer, won. He agreed to marry a spinster if she could raise \$500. She was able to get together only \$390, so the farmer called it off, despite the fact that he had ordered the clergyman to be on hand to marry them. The judge said that the promise to marry was conditional, and the condition had not been fulfilled.

Robert Wynne, the former United States consul-general in London, intends to resume newspaper work in the British capital. Before Mr. Wynne became postmaster-general of the United States he had a long and brilliant journalistic career, being also president of the Gridiron Club at Washington. He is intimately acquainted at first hand with London and its celebrities.

There is an old superstition that if a spider settles on one's clothes it is a sign that he will shortly receive money. "When a spider is found upon our clothes," says an old writer, "we used to say, some money is coming toward us. The moral is this: Such who imitate the industry of that contemptible creature may, by God's blessing, weave themselves into wealth and procure a plentiful estate."

To get rock for the Morena dam in southern California, one of the biggest blasting operations on record has just been successfully carried out. Describing the feat, the Engineering Record says that a tunnel 125 feet long was first driven into the face of the granite. In this chamber was placed 38,950 pounds of powder and dynamite. This was exploded by electric fuses and dislodged 120,000 cubic yards of rock.

Blue books have a reputation for typographical accuracy almost equal to that of the famous Clarendon Press, which is said to offer a guinea reward for the detection of a single printer's error in the editions of the Holy Scriptures. A "cancel" note just received from the king's printers shows the remarkable anxiety to insure correctness. It informs us that in a chart attached to the "Army Medical Report of 1908" there is a misplaced dot. Can this example of minute corrigenda be beaten?—London Chronicle.

In Belgium a prisoner has turned the old trick and escaped through the prison window hospital. The prince of rogues weighed 300 pounds and found himself too large to pass through his cell window, so he played sick and "soldiered" around until they put him into the prison hospital. He ate nothing to speak of for fifty days, and became so thin that he easily squeezed through a window of the "chronic" ward, having at odd times sawn through the bars. Once through the window friends below helped him to the ground and took him in an auto.

The cutting blowpipe, of which so many surprising things have been reported, has recently been improved in France in a way to render it more generally useful. Two inflammable gases must be employed. One is required to keep the metal at a high temperature. The other is oxygen to concentrate action by oxidation along the line of the cut. For heating, either coal gas, acetylene or hydrogen is employed, but as there is sometimes difficulty in procuring a supply of these gases the new blowpipe is arranged to use instead the ordinary gasoline employed by motorists.

The charge that bees are destructive to the fruit on the tree is not borne out by the facts. Their tongues are formed exclusively for the extraction of sweet juices, and their mandibles are unable to pierce the skin of a fruit. Grapes have been taken intact from the interior of a hive in which they had been allowed to remain four days. A grape which had been smeared with honey was licked clean, but was not injured. The bees inserted their tongues in pinholes made in the skin of a grape, and extracted some of the juice, but they were unable to enlarge the holes.

Writing about the family of King Albert of Belgium, a Berlin correspondent says: "Little Prince Leopold is making rapid progress as a violinist. He displays no phenomenal talent. The music teacher has a painstaking and intelligent assistant in Queen Elizabeth, who is an accomplished violinist. A picture which was recently taken shows the queen in a plain black skirt and a white shirtwaist, with not the smallest ornament visible, standing in a plainly furnished room, violin in hand, teaching the little prince. It is the kind of picture which will go far toward winning the respect and esteem of the people."

PRESIDENT TAFT AS HE WOULD APPEAR WEARING THE PROPOSED STATE JEWELS



A member of the National House of Representatives has evolved a plan to distinguish Mr. Taft and all future presidents by a splendid symbol of gold and jewels. According to the plan the decoration is to consist of a chain of gold with a huge pendant, which is to be a replica of the great seal of State, embellished with diamonds and enriched by the highest art of the engraver. The remainder of this gorgeous chain is to be wrought of smaller reproductions of the seals of the forty-nine States and territories of the United States, linked together with jeweled golden doves, to symbolize the peace and unity in which they all dwell together in one republic.

Such a superb embellishment, the originator of the idea believes, would fitly designate the president of this great republic and mark him out among his fellow men on any occasion of formality. Besides, it could be retained by ex-presidents as a sort of token of political pastmastership and passed on to their descendants as a pleasant reminder that an ancestor had been in the president's chair. The supporters of the plan would have a replica of the Taft chain presented to Theodore Roosevelt, and favor the wearing of a similar but less ornate chain by the governors of the States for purposes of distinction. The opponents of the decoration say it savors of Zelazka or Castro rather than of a country which is proud of its Lincoln, its Franklin, its Jackson and other Americans who needed no gilding to make them great. And no one enjoys the joke, it is said, more than President Taft himself.

Science AND Invention

Continuing his researches, begun with the ordinary ultraviolet rays, Bilou-Daguerre in France has recently experimented with still shorter rays of the spectrum, measuring down to 1,000 units, for the sterilization of all kinds of liquids. He finds that the very short rays are 25 times as effective as the longer ones in their sterilizing power. He uses quartz vacuum tubes, immersed in the liquid, and illuminated with currents much more feeble than those required for the mercury vapor lamps at first employed.

One of the pressing problems in aerial navigation is that of producing automatic stability. Some investigators think that a way may be found to cause an aeroplane so to adjust itself to atmospheric vagaries so that its balance will be maintained without interference. Others are doubtful, believing that stability must always be obtained very much in the manner in which it is acquired by a bicycle rider, that is, by unconscious adjustment. Birds, the best of fliers, it is remarked, do not possess mechanical stability, but maintain their balance in gusty weather by action which has become so habitual that it is unconscious. Thus the element of intelligence is involved, although by virtue of long practice it is applied without conscious exertion of the will.

From 1900 to 1906 L. S. Berg carried on investigations round the Sea of Aral, and the results have been published in Russian. They lead to the conclusion, contrary to that reached by others, that there is no general drying up of this inland sea, but that periodic changes of its water level occur, and that the level has been rising continually since 1880. Berg finds the salinity 10.75 per 1,000, as against more than 12 per 1,000 about 1870. The sea has now a superficial area of about 24,000 square miles, but is very shallow, the mean depth being about 220 feet. Its total volume of water is only about one-tenth of that of the Lake of Baikal, which has but little

more than half its area. The water is supplied wholly by the rivers Amu and Syr, which together deliver, on the average, 1,500 cubic meters per second. The water is derived from melting mountain snows.

Titanium steel rails for railroads were first made experimentally in 1907. The results that they showed led to their manufacture by several steel companies in 1908, and during 1909, according to the Engineering and Mining Journal, their manufacture entered upon the commercial scale. Experiments on the New York Central have confirmed those made elsewhere in showing that these rails wear several times as long as those made of ordinary Bessemer steel. Titanium has a great affinity for nitrogen, and since it is believed that considerable nitrogen remains as an impurity in ordinary steel, the good effects of an alloy of titanium are ascribed to its acting as a flux, thereby removing impurities and increasing the solidity of the steel. The increased cost is put at \$3.50 per ton of rails.

Really Poor Fenman.

There is a certain Philadelphia physician of considerable prominence who is renowned among his friends as the worst penman in the Quaker city. He used to write them letters and then feel hurt when they could not read them. When he wrote to persons who were not familiar with his scrawl they frequently would not know whom the letters were from. Some time ago he introduced a typewriter into his office, and this rendered the body of the letter intelligible, but did not clear up the difficulty over the signature.

Now, however, says the Record, he has had made a rubber stamp bearing his name and address in printing. He signs his name in the usual scrawl, but alongside he impresses his stamp. It is a little humiliating, he says, but he no longer has any trouble about persons to whom he writes not knowing from whom the letters are.

In the west, an automobile story is always started on every man who makes more than a hundred dollars a month.

The city is always in the situation of a poor man with very extravagant tastes.